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ABSTRACT

The parent's role in the education of young learning disabled (LD) children is examined, and research is cited on the effects of learning facilitating experiences (LFEs) on reading achievement. Good readers in fourth, fifth, and sixth grade realized the following seven LFEs most frequently: parental desire for higher education for the adult; parental praise for writing, drawing, or reading; parental feelings that the quality of kindergarten and first grade reading instruction is good; working with pencil and paper at home; talking with a parent about daily activities; parental willingness to answer questions; and parental reading of books and stories to the child. Another study showed that parents, even though undereducated, can provide a significant start for their children during the first year of formal schooling. Results of other studies show that one to one tutorial approaches are important and viable ways of providing learning skill improvement to LD school age children. (CL)

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FACILITATING EXPERIENCES FOR LEARNING DISABLED CHILDREN

Few persons would deny that there are many children in the world who have much difficulty learning. The reasons for their learning difficulties are usually complex, are often inter-related, and seldom can be attributed to a single cause. Yet, if it were possible to know enough about children who cannot learn, the primary reasons for their learning difficulties could probably be traced to either their physical or psychological constitution or to their experiences in the home and school. Therefore, this paper will deal with the structuring of some specific experiences for the home and school which are designed to help children overcome learning disabilities.

It should be noted that many children are handicapped with either impaired vision, hearing, health, neurological damage, emotional instability, or lack of mental capacity. These children, while they may or may not have many of the characteristics of the learning disabled child, have traditionally been classified according to their particular, and most apparent, handicapping condition, and regardless of their learning potential or capacity, have rarely been labled learning disabled.

Many other children, however, have difficulty learning but lack an easily identifiable or apparent handicapping condition such as poor vision, poor hearing, or neurological damage. These children appear normal in every way to the casual observer. They show the potential or capacity to learn academic skills appropriate to their chronological age level, or mental age level, but have not yet adequately mastered the subject matter taught in school such as reading, arithmetic, spelling, writing, speaking, and language skills. They may have, or may not have, central

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precessing problems such as perceptual difficulty, brain damage, and neurological dysfunction of some type or another, but neurological examination reveals that the central processing system is intact and functioning normally. These children will be referred to as learning disabled.

In view of most current definitions, the label disabled learner could be considered a misnomer especially since the term suggests that the child is at fault rather than the environment and particularly since implicit in most definitions of the learning disabled child, or learning disabilities, is the understanding that the child has the capacity, the ability, and the potential to master various learning skills. All that is necessary, the definitions imply, is a change in the child's environment: a restructuring of the learning steps, a different set of materials, a different classroom setting, a different instructional approach, and so on and so forth. In other words, children with learning disabilities are able to learn formal academic skills, and are capable of learning skills commensurate with their mental capacity, when the environment, both physical and social, facilitates rather than debilitates the act of learning.

Studies by this writer and others support the notion that deliberate changes in the environment of both the home and the school can significantly affect the learning ability and academic performance of children. The first purpose of this paper is to show that the pre-school experiences provided by parents at home do have a powerful influence on whether or not their children learn formal academic skills in school. The second purpose is to show that mothers can and should be taught explicitly how to teach their young children formal academic skills such as reading. The third purpose is to show that for learning disabled school-age children neither self-contained classrooms, nor hetergeneous grouping, nor homogeneous grouping nor resource rooms, nor resource teachers, not mainstreaming, nor small-group instruction, and the like, can provide, in and of themselves, sufficient progress

for children who need to learn.

Finally, the fourth purpose is to show that whether we like the arrangement or not, learning disabled children make optimum gains in learning in one-to-one instructional settings. The ideal one-to-one setting, of course, would include a highly trained, competent instructor who understands the subject matter, the child, and the teaching-learning process -- who, in short, applies the basic principles of learning in his or her teaching. But, as this paper will show, student tutors, well-trained and under the supervision of qualified teachers, can also provide valuable learning experiences for learning disabled children.

Learning in the Home

The cognitive and affective development of children begins with their parents, in their own homes. The influence is irrefutable and one cannot overstress the importance of the home environment in preparing children for formal learning experiences in school. Parents can stimulate children's early awareness of, and interest in, reading, mathematics, spelling, writing, and language.

Marion Monroe emphasized in her book on reading readiness more than twenty-five years ago, that parents play a large role in developing emotional attitudes, physical growth, and language skills which are important for early school learning (Monroe, 1951). In a study of reading readiness, Hess focuses on the influence of the home environment on the learning ability of children and reports that children are affected by (1) the degree of crowding in the living quarters, (2) the use of home resources by mothers to aid cognitive growth, (3) the mothers' participation in outside activities, (4) the amount of time mothers read to their children, (5) the mothers' feelings of effectiveness in dealing with life, (6) the maternal teaching style used when showing children how to do something, and (7) to some extent, the language facility of the mothers (Hess, 1969). In

a study of secondary school underachievers, Engle and Szyperski show that the underachieving syndrome is rooted in the home environment (Engle and Szyperski, 1965). Johnson also cites the influence of the home in his study of secondary school reading proficiency and discusses the importance of the variables of race, sex, chronological age, intelligence, socio-economic status and educational level of parents (Johnson, 1969).

Giammatteo finds that learning behavior of children from low-income families is affected by pre-school and early-school experiences and suggests that parents be trained to improve specific learning behaviors as well as inter-personal behaviors of their children which affect learning (Giammatteo, 1970). Grayum shows how parents' attitudes, whether positive or negative, affect children's learning (Grayum, 1958), and Cook says that besides knowing the various techniques and material for helping children in a learning area, such as reading, parents must be aware of other ways in which they can assist their children - physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally (Cook, 1954).

One of the most authoritative and convincing research reports on the effect of home stimulation programs on the learning of children comes from Karnes and Teska (Karnes, 1975). The authors conclude that:

> The overriding question that must be answered before any others make sense is: Can the developmental status of children be changed through deliberate programming? The answer to that from the available research is "yes". It is possible to move groups of children from one-half to one standard deviation higher on measures of intellectual ability.

They find, however, that gains in intellectual ability as measured by standard tests are often only temporary and that achievement and motivational gains are retained for a longer period of time. Further, their review of studies shows that highly skilled and expensive professionals are not necessary to achieve gains and that well-trained para-professionals or parents can be effective in

achieving results. The authors lament the fact that in many instances the researchers failed to report, or did not know, the day-by-day interactions, or experiences, of the children, siblings, parents, or outside teachers and that the results of the research have not been translated into programs which can be put into action.

It is interesting to note, nevertheless, the success of nearly every intervention home program reported. The intervention technique almost invariably involves one-to-one instruction, uses a structured program implemented at an early age, and is sustained over a long period of time (at least a year or more).

Pre-School Experiences in the Home

A study conducted in Kansas City, Missouri, showed that in the home various specific pre-school Learning Facilitating Experiences (LFE's) relate closely to the reading achievement of good and poor readers in grades four, five, and six (George, 1975). While LFE's are described in the research literature and have been the subject of many research studies, few studies relate the LFE's to reading achievement, especially the reading achievement of fourth, fifth, and sixth graders.

The first problem was to discover if good readers realized more LFE's than poor readers. The second problem was to determine what particular LFE's good readers realized <u>most</u> frequently and <u>least</u> frequently. The third problem was to determine what particular LFE's ranked conspiciously higher for the good readers than for the poor readers.

Finally, the educational significance and implications of the findings had to be considered. Should this study, and subsequent experimental studies as well, show that certain LFE's consistently correlate highly with reading achievement,

then educators, it would seem, should direct much more effort to the development of home programs that provide specific early Learning Facilitating Experiences for children.

The children in the study lived in a semi-rural area near Kansas City, Missouri, and attended a local elementary school. They were labeled either good or poor readers on the basis of their ranking on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills, Form Q, Level I. At each grade level, the eight students who ranked the highest on the CTBS were labeled good readers, and the eight students who ranked the lowest on the CTBS were labeled poor readers. The good readers scored at their grade level or above in reading performance whereas the poor readers scored well below grade level in reading performance.

The parents of the children completed the George Literacy Prediction Scale (George, 1974) in a personal interview conducted in the homes of parents. Items on the scale, other than demographic items, include thirty statements such as "How much time did you spend talking with your child about what was interesting to him or her?" Each item contains a scale ranging from 1 to 5. Regarding the pre-school experiences of the children a rating of 1 indicates NONE or NEVER, 2 indicates VERY LITTLE or SOMETIMES, 3 indicates SOME or FREQUENTLY, 4 indicates MUCH or OFTEN, and 5 indicates VERY MUCH or ALWAYS. The parents completed all of the items on the scale except one parent who did not respond to four items and other parents who did not respond to a total of six items. Parents made a total of 1,430 specific responses (8 x 30 x 6) out of the 1,440 responses available.

An analysis of the responses showed, as might be expected, that the good readers received more Learning Facilitating Experiences (LFE's) than the poor readers during their pre-school years. The good readers scored an average of 3.8 on the 1 to 5 scale. The poor readers scored 3.1. All of which means that, generally, good readers as pre-schoolers receive LFE's MUCH OF THE TIME or OFTEN

and that poor readers as pre-schoolers receive LFE's SOME OF THE TIME or SOMEWHAT FREQUENTLY. The overall mean scores for the good readers in fourth, fifth, and sixth grades, respectively, were 3.8, 3.8, and 3.9. The overall mean scores for the poor readers in fourth, fifth, and sixth grades, respectively, were 3.0, 3.3, and 3.1.

Good readers realized the following seven LFE's most frequently. They are listed here in order of most frequently realized to least frequently realized.

1. Parental desire for higher education for the adult.
2. Parental praise for writing, drawing, or reading.
3. Parental feelings that the quality of kindergarten and first grade reading instruction is good.
4. Working with pencil and paper at home.
5. Talking with a parent about what is seen and heard while shopping, going for a walk, riding in car, etc.
6. Parental willingness to answer questions.
7. Parental reading of books and stories to the child.

Good readers realized the following three LFE's least frequently.

1. Parental feelings that their family income is higher than the income of neighbors.
2. Serious emotional or physical needs.
3. Parental feelings that the child was brighter than other children the parent knows.

On the other hand, poor readers realized the following seven LFE's most frequently. They are listed here in order of most frequently to least frequently realized.

1. Parental harmony.
2. Parental desire for higher education for the child.
3. Lack of conflicts with siblings.

4. Parental teaching of words to say.

5. Parental praise for writing, drawing, or reading.

6. Talking with a parent about what is seen or heard while shopping, going for a walk, riding in a car, etc.

7. Parental willingness to answer questions.

Poor readers realized the following three LFE's least frequently.

1. Parental feeling that their income is higher than the income of neighbors.

2. Trips to the library.

3. Parental feelings that the child was brighter than other children the parent knows.

Parents of good readers, as opposed to parents of poor readers, ranked four LFE's conspicuously differently. In each of the following four instances, the LFE ranked high for good readers and low for poor readers.

1. Parent feelings that the quality of kindergarten and first grade reading instruction is good. The LFE was ranked third (3) for good readers and twenty-sixth (26) for poor readers. The difference in rank order is minus twenty-three (-23).

2. Being read to by a parent from books and stories. This LFE was ranked seventh (7) for good readers and twenty-second (22) for poor readers. The difference in rank order is minus fifteen (-15).

3. Reading material for adults in the home. This LFE was ranked tenth (10) for good readers and twenty-fourth (24) for poor readers. The difference in rank order is minus thirteen (-13).

4. Working with pencil and paper at home. This LFE was ranked fourth (4) for good readers and twelfth (12) for poor readers. The difference in rank order is minus eight (-8).

Good readers in fourth, fifth, and sixth grades, then, show a difference from poor readers in the number and pattern of their pre-school Learning Facilitating Experiences (LFE's). First, good readers are shown to have a significantly greater number of pre-school LFE's than poor readers. Second, the rank ordering

of certain LFE's is conspicuously different for the two groups of children. Ranking high for good readers but low for poor readers is (1) the quality of early reading instruction in kindergarten and first grade, (2) parents reading books and stories to the child, (3) parents displaying many of their own books in the home, and (4) the child's working with pencil and paper. Third, many of the LFE items ranked the very highest for good readers are those which relate closely to learning reading or reading instruction, whereas the LFE items ranked the very highest for poor readers are those which do not relate closely to learning reading or reading instruction.

The following data show the ratings of LFE's for both good readers and poor readers. The items are ranked from the most frequently realized to the least frequently realized LFE's for good readers based on the mean difference between their scores. The corresponding rating for poor readers is provided. How much the rating of good readers differs from the rating of poor readers on the 1 to 5 scale is also provided.

PRE-SCHOOL LEARNING FACILITATING EXPERIENCES
OF GOOD AND POOR READERS IN GRADES 4, 5, and 6

EXPERIENCES OF CHILDREN	MEANS		DIFFERENCE
	Good Readers	Poor Readers	
1. Quality of Early Reading Instruction	4.39	2.41	1.98
2. Parents Displaying Many of Own Books	4.23	2.78	1.45
3. Parents Reading Books and Stories to Child	4.27	2.83	1.44
4. Working with Paper and Pencil	4.38	3.35	1.03
5. Parents Thinking Child Succeeds	3.76	2.73	1.03
6. Going to Library	2.99	2.00	0.99
7. Playing Imaginative Games	3.88	2.98	0.90

	EXPERIENCES OF CHILDREN	MEANS		DIFFERENCE
		Good Readers	Poor Readers	
8.	Parent Agreeing with Spouse on Child's Needs	4.21	3.32	0.89
9.	Seeing Magazine Reading at Home	3.63	2.82	0.81
10.	Seeing Parents Read Books, Newspapers	4.12	3.31	0.81
11.	Being Taught Letters, Signs, etc.	3.76	2.95	0.81
12.	Discussing Interests with Parents	3.91	3.16	0.75
13.	Owning Many Books	4.23	3.53	0.70
14.	Receiving Praise for Writing, Drawing, Reading	4.49	3.80	0.69
15.	Parents Thinking Child is Brighter	2.72	2.04	0.68
16.	Parents Desiring Higher Education for Child	4.63	4.00	0.63
17.	Discussing Problems with Parents	4.14	3.56	0.58
18.	Discussing Things Seen Shopping, etc.	4.19	3.74	0.55
19.	Getting Answers to Questions	4.28	3.73	0.55
20.	Working Undisturbed by Self	3.42	2.96	0.46
21.	Being Taught to Say Unknown Words	4.26	3.87	0.39
22.	Higher Income than Neighbors	1.41	1.03	0.38
23.	Taking Educational Trips	3.54	3.21	0.33
24.	Parents Attending School Functions	3.55	3.32	0.23
25.	Parents Willing to Teach Child to Read	3.90	3.69	0.21
26.	Receiving Talking rather than Spanking	3.32	3.13	0.19
27.	Getting Along with Siblings	4.05	3.91	0.14
28.	Hearing Arguments between Parents	4.24	4.14	0.10
29.	Watching Educational T.V.	3.10	3.39	-0.29
30.	Serious Emotional or Physical Needs	1.73	2.12	-0.39

The provision of learning facilitating experiences in the pre-school years can spell the difference between children who read well and children who have reading as well as other learning problems. How well children read determines to a great extent how well they are able to perform in most subject matter areas in school and in many areas of life as well. Study after study shows that the learning ability of children is largely determined by how skillfully the family provides learning experiences in the home.

Providing very young children with an environment which stimulates later formal learning is one of the best ways to prevent learning disabilities in children. A few days of age is not too young to begin consciously providing a learning facilitating environment. Early successes and pleasant associations with learning are good predictors of later successes in learning. Early failures and either unpleasant or insufficient associations with learning are good predictors of later failures in learning.

The job for educators, then, seems clear. They must show parents how to provide early success and pleasant associations with learning for their children as well as show parents how to provide their children with specific experiences which facilitate formal learning such as the learning of language, reading, and arithmetic skills. Publications, television programs, counseling sessions, informal discussions, and parent training classes can all be used to get practical information to parents before it is too late -- the point at which their children are in school and the learning disability is imminent.

Mothers as Teachers

In Kansas City, Missouri, mothers taught their own children reading readiness and beginning reading skills using a structured program called the Tutor-Student System in Beginning Reading (George, 1971). The program grew out of the belief that a group of parents -- for the most part poor and undereducated urban mothers --

could use a structured tutoring program to teach their own children how to read. The parent trainers, who were other highly trained parents from the community, used specific "say" and "do" Tutor-Student System scripts as well as a video demonstration tape which showed a parent following the "say" and "do" directions with her child.

The training segment of the program was taken from the university to the parents rather than visa versa. Training sessions were held in locations as close to the parents as possible. For three weeks the parents attended six one-and-one-half-hour training lessons for a total of nine hours of training. Then the parents demonstrated their ability to use the Tutor-Student System with their own children in two one-and-one-half-hour review, or practice, sessions.

The Tutor-Student System consists of specific "say" and "do" instructions for tutors, in this case the mothers of kindergarten children. The "say" and "do" instructions cover Reading Sentences, Reading Words, and Phonics in the content area of reading. The instructional system also includes response sheets, pictures, and other instructional material.

The reading instructional approach used includes grapheme-phoneme (phonics) instruction and other word analysis skill or word recognition skill instruction. But instruction begins with the spoken language of the particular child and then proceeds to the learning of the sentence, the words in the sentence, the word parts, and finally the graphic-phonemic relationships within the words. The children are taught to read the words and sentences with the fluency with which they use their spoken language.

Three additional "say" and "do" checklists were used in this study in order to mediate and facilitate the learning of reading. One "say and"do" checklist was on Building Concepts and one was on Reading to the Child. Another "say" and "do" checklist which the mothers used but which has little to do with actual reading skill instruction as such, was on Meeting the Student's Needs. The

instructions on the Needs Checklist are based on Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs and point out the importance of meeting physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, and esteem needs before attempting to meet cognitive needs (such as the need to learn reading, writing, and arithmetic).

The groups of children from three different locations in Kansas City were pre-tested with the Boehm Test of Basic Concepts, the Lee Clark Reading Readiness Test, the Wide Range Achievement Test (Reading Section), and the Wechsler Pre-School and Primary Scale of Intelligence (Verbal Section). The children in each group were then randomly assigned to experiemtnal and control groups. Seventy-four children and their mothers participated in the study.

Parents in the experimental groups tutored their children for two months during the summer before their children entered first grade. They were visited periodically in their homes and were observed working with their children. All children were post-tested at the end of the summer.

The lead in reading achievement of the parent-tutored children over the non-tutored children was an average of seven months. A t test for statistical difference showed that the children in the experimental groups did better in reading than the children in the control groups at the .01 level of significance. No difference in verbal intelligence was determined. The study indicates that parents, even though undereducated, can be an important factor in their children's learning of formal reading and can provide a significant head start for their children during the first year of formal schooling.

Children as Teachers

Many children arrive in school and, because of an insufficient or inadequate background of experiences, demonstrate almost immediately that they cannot acquire the learning skills which are taught in the regular classroom. As mentioned earlier, a number of alternative measures have been used to enable these children to learn, such as mainstreaming, homogeneous grouping, resource rooms, resource

teachers, programmed instruction, and so forth. Studies show relatively little progress in learning skill achievement for these children when taught in groups, regardless of the materials used or the quality of the instructor. But almost invariably, as the following studies show, one-to-one instruction, even when provided by students, can be an effective remediation approach for children with learning disabilities.

Jenkins and his associates conducted a series of studies comparing small group and tutorial instruction in a resource room setting (Jenkins et al., 1974). The children received tutoring on a one-to-one basis from older children as well as small group instruction by the resource teacher. According to the study, the children learned more from a student tutor in a one-to-one tutorial setting than from the resource teacher in a small group setting. They learned more in word recognition, spelling, oral reading, and multiplication. The authors also point out that tutorial instruction was superior to self instruction and that tutors appeared to benefit academically from the experiences.

Melaragno describes a program being conducted in a number of schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District in which all children in the school are involved as either tutors or learners (Melaragno, 1974). The tutorial program is the primary reading program in the school and involves intermediate grade children as tutors of primary grade children. Classroom teachers serve as tutor trainers as well as supervisors of tutorial instruction. A controlled study of twenty-five pairs of first and second grade children and their fifth and sixth grade tutors showed more than seven months reading improvement for the learners and more than five months reading improvement for the tutors during a two and one-half month period. In the same study, twenty-four other first, second, and third grade children, described as low achievers in reading, had pre-test scores averaging 1.8 and post-test scores averaging 4.3.

Many other studies report similar results. As Cloward concludes in his report of studies in tutoring (Cloward, 1967), "It is clear from the findings of these studies that to be effective, tutors do not need twelve years of formal education and extensive training in reading pedagogy. Nor need they be highly successful in their own school work. The average high school student can learn to be an effective tutor."

In a year-long study by Pettegrew, first to third grade children in a learning disability class were tutored thirty minutes per day by fifth graders using the Tutor-Student System (George, 1973). The teacher, a highly skilled professional, undoubtedly greatly influenced the gains the students made in learning as well as the teaching performance of the fifth grade tutors. In any case, the gains made by the students were impressive (Pettegrew, 1976). The Peabody Individual Achievement Test showed a total average, or mean, pre-test to post-test gain of 1.43, mathematics gain of 2.06, reading recognition gain of 1.53, reading comprehension gain of 1.76, spelling gain of 1.28, and general information gain of 1.28. The Wide Range Achievement Test showed pre-test to post-test gains of 1.36 in reading, 1.17 in spelling, and 1.53 in arithmetic. The Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test showed pre-test to post-test gains of 1.87 in total reading, 1.28 in vocabulary, and 2.2 in reading comprehension.

A similar program was conducted by Landes in Lee's Summit, Missouri, where six first grade children were identified at the beginning of the school year as children about to have problems in learning, especially in the area of reading. The children were tutored by sixth grade students for seven months using the Tutor-Student System. Again the children and the tutors in the program had the benefit of a highly skilled teacher, but the gains in reading comprehension for the children being tutored were well above normal (Landes and Prugh, 1974). The Durrell Analysis of Reading Difficulty Test showed at the end of the first grade year an average reading comprehension grade level score of 3.0.

An experimental study of one-to-one tutoring at the high school level in Kansas City showed statistically significant results in favor of students who were tutored by other students (George, 1974). Of thirty-six students in tenth and eleventh grades who were identified as reading below the 4.0 grade level, eighteen were randomly assigned to the experimental, or tutored, group and eighteen were assigned to the control, or non-tutored group. Statistical analysis showed that there was no difference between the two groups in reading ability before the tutoring program began. The tutored group received one-to-one instruction from the Tutor-Student System one hour each day for ten weeks, whereas the control group received classroom instruction in a homogeneous group setting for ten weeks. The eighteen tutors in the study were nine eleventh and twelfth grade high school students and nine students from the University of Missouri - Kansas City.

Results of the Kansas City study show that the tutored group made gains over the non-tutored group at the .05 level of significance in word recognition, reading comprehension, and overall reading improvement according to the Gilmore Oral Reading Test, Form C. Vocabulary knowledge and attitude toward reading and education in general were not improved at a statistically significant level. In reading comprehension, the non-tutored group scored 2.8 on the pre-test and 3.5 on the post-test for a gain of seven months. The tutored group scored 2.8 on the pre-test and 5.3 on the post-test showing a gain of two years and five months. In the area of reading accuracy, the non-tutored group scored 3.0 on the pre-test and 2.9 on the post-test for a loss of one month. The tutored group scored 3.3 on the pre-test and 4.6 on the post-test showing a gain of one year and three months.

The one-to-one tutoring program provided in the Kansas City study as well as other carefully conceived one-to-one tutoring programs do provide an alternative to the many school learning disability programs now in operation in which many children are not making the progress they should be making. The success of tutoring programs, according to Melaragno, is due primarily to the careful

specification of reading objectives, the utilization of instructional and tutorial procedures designed to accomplish those objectives, and the incorporation of specific training procedures for participating teachers and student tutors (Melaragno, 1971). Pettegrew adds an important ingredient to the successful tutoring recipe in her report (Pettegrew, 1976), when she says that a complete tutoring program should contain not only systematic procedures for skill development but also a highly structured tutor training program.

But perhaps the most important ingredient of all is the belief in and acceptance of the one-to-one tutorial program approach as one of the important and viable ways to provide learning skill improvement to learning disabled school age children. The time has come, it would seem, for educators, and others interested in helping disabled children, to take tutoring programs seriously rather than thinking of them as a fad, an innovation, or, perhaps, "an amusing project that Ms. Carter's first graders and Ms. Gomez' sixth graders are engaged in." After all, the research data do show that well-conceived one-to-one tutoring programs consistently produce much improvement for learning disabled children -- which is more than we can say for most other educational programs and innovations that have been designed to help children learn.

In a word, then, what learning disabled children need is support. At home, they need the support of experiences which will militate against other constitutional tendencies or environmental circumstances which produce learning disabilities. In school, they need the support of courageous and capable teachers, principals, superintendents, and governmental agencies -- not only those who are willing to question on-going school programs for learning disabled children but also those who are able to institute programs which will move learning disabled children as quickly as possible from where they are in learning skills to where they should be.

Finally, the comments here on facilitating experiences for learning disabled children provide only one perspective to a complex problem. There is no single

perspective, program, or answer which best fits learning disabled children. The more we know about learning disabled children the closer we will be to providing appropriate experiences for them.

In conclusion, before we say that we have the best program, or the best set of experiences, or the best of anything for learning disabled children, however, we should realize how little we actually know about children. They are, we must realize, at least as complex as their constitutional make-up and the sum of their experiences, as infinitessimal and vaguely inter-related as the experiences might be. Nevertheless, there are insightful, perceptive, hard-working, concerned, caring, and loving parents, tutors, and teachers who are making impressive improvement every day for millions of learning disabled children throughout the world. Unheralded in their work, they deserve support and recognition for determining and meeting the individual needs of children. As with all good parents, tutors and teachers, they continue to hone their sensitivity to and plan their teaching around the child and his background of experiences.

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